Kekkon

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Kekkon

by iesika

Summary

In the aftermath of the Chesapeake Ripper's latest killing spree, Jack Crawford puts together the pieces the Ripper and his accomplice left behind.

Notes

Continued by popular demand. Be careful what you wish for :)

To Have And To Hold

One of their bodies conveniently turns up an immediate hit based on prints; the other turns out to be more law-abiding, or at least he's never been booked. Jack leaves the scene to the techs and scrolls through the file Jimmy sent him, on his way to the car.

Will had said these victims were important. Or that they were, to use Will's word, assholes. Not randomly selected, but picked for some kind of contrast. The one with the dogs was clear enough, once Will had pointed it out. The Chesapeake Ripper had killed a dog fighter and put him in a cage, then left him as some kind of twisted present for a man with at least half a dozen pets. It's hardly subtle. Some of the others he's less sure of, but Will's assessments certainly haven't been proven wrong, yet, and with an absolute lack of physical evidence the profile is all they have to go on.

Christian Porter was on parole after assaulting a coworker's boyfriend. There are stalking and harassment charges, too, when Jack looks further back. One woman and one man had taken out restraining orders against him over the five years prior to his three year sentence. He'd been out after a year, and apparently employed and sober for the last four months, with another eight months to go before he'd be a free man.

Jack leaves a message with the man's parole officer and collects an escort to the listed address from the mess of officers crowding the church parking lot.

The woman who opens the door looks tired. She's about Jack's age or a little older, and her hair is pulled up in a wrap like Bella's favored of late. She peers out at Jack in his suit and the uniformed officer at his shoulder and seems to shrink as she tugs her robe tight and hunches her shoulders. "What's he done this time?" she asks, voice frustrated and weary.

"Ma'am. Are you Mrs. Porter?" At her nod he produces his badge. "I'm Agent Jack Crawford, with the FBI-"

"Oh lord," she says. "Well, that's new. You'd better come in, then."

He follows her into the kitchen, where she gestures at the table before lighting the fire under a kettle. "You a tea man or a coffee man?" She asks.

"Coffee would be wonderful," Jack says. He glances at Officer Mulhern, who nods.

"It'll just be instant," she tells him as she gets out a jar.

"That'll be fine. We're in no place to be picky and we have a long night ahead of us, so we're grateful for the offer. Please sit down, ma'am."

This is the worst part of Jack's job, and always has been. The higher he's gotten in the ranks, the more he's had to do it. He waits until Mrs. Porter is sitting down, her hands folded on the table.

"I knew I'd be getting a visit or a call from someone," she says. "Since Chris didn't come home last night. What kind of trouble is he in?"

"There's not an easy way to say this," Jack tells her. He sees her flex her fingers against the table and thinks she might have figured it out from that. "We found your son's body in Annapolis today."

Mrs. Porter presses her hands to the table, and then lifts them to press to her drawn face. "Well, damn," she says through her fingers.

When the kettle whistles, Officer Mulhern takes it off the stove and pulls mugs from the rack by the sink. Jack watches her make the coffee and allows Mrs. Porter a few minutes without being stared at. When Mulhern brings over the coffee she also brings the box of tissues from the counter. Jack shoots her a little smile and makes a mental note to mention her to the chief next time Jack sees him.

"What happened then?" Mrs. Porter demands once she's able. "You said his body was found. That doesn't sound like he got into another fight."

"No," Jack says. "Not to my knowledge." The body had been weird, for the Ripper. He had marks on him like he'd been in a fight, and had either been stunned or killed by a blow to the head. The other victim had the more usual lack of clear injuries other than the fatal mutilations, as if he'd been suffocated or perhaps put in a gentle sleeper hold before that monster slit him open from groin to throat. "We think he was deliberately killed. Had Christian been in any fights lately?"

"Oh sure." Her hands go over her mouth again. "Yes, this weekend. He went out all dressed up and wouldn't say where he was going, just that he was meeting someone. He came home real late and he was all banged up. We had a shouting match about it - about how he was going to end up back in prison or worse if he didn't watch himself. Guess I was right. Not much comfort, really."

"No," Jack agrees, "I imagine not." He leans forward in his seat, interested. "Do you have any idea who he fought with?"

She shrugs. "A cop, he said. That's why I wasn't surprised to see you."

Jack's mind ticks over. "This was Saturday?"

"Sunday by the time he made it home. He said he'd gone out to meet an old friend who was having relationship trouble. Turns out the friend was dating a cop, and the cop's been beating him up, or at least that's what Chris was saying. The friend didn't know how to get out of it. I figured it was like the business at the dealership all over again."

"The assault charge?" Jack asks, wanting confirmation.

"He gets these… *got* these crushes, I suppose. Infatuations, or whatever you want to call them. Even when he was a little boy, he'd fixate on some older kid and follow them around. There was a woman at his old work, and he was convinced she needed rescuing from her

fiance, which is how he ended up in jail. No one's been able to tell that boy nothing since his father passed, God rest his soul." She frowns. "You oughta know this, though. That cop didn't report it?"

Jack tries to keep his voice and face even. "No, ma'am, I haven't seen any reports that seem connected. Do you have any idea where he might have gone, or who the friend or the police officer might have been?"

Mrs. Porter's eyes narrow and harden. "I didn't even ask if you knew who did it."

"We're still working on that," Jack tells her. "The investigation is ongoing and there's only so much I can tell you."

"You think it was that cop, though," she insists.

"Ma'am, I *sincerely* hope whoever killed your son is not involved in law enforcement in any way." God, does he ever. He's trying not to even think about that possibility, but he has to. He has to investigate every angle. "But if he was, you have my word, we're not going to go easy on him."

Mrs. Porter seems to think about this for a moment, staring hard at Jack as she does. Finally, she nods. "You're welcome to go through his room. He didn't bring people home, but there might be something there. And I found something today in the laundry."

She gets up and heads to a set of folding doors on tracks, on the other side of the kitchen table. They turn out to have been hiding a washer and dryer and a set of shelves, off which she pulls a blue china bowl and plucks up a little piece of black and white paper.

She hands it to Jack. It's a ticket stub for some kind of event in Baltimore, on Saturday night.

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He puts Lewandowski on the performance and the venue. He's a good interviewer and he has the patience for reviewing security footage. And he can keep his mouth shut.

He calls Bella from the car. "I'm sorry, babe," he tells her. "This is going to be a long one. Do you need anything? I could send someone by."

"I need you home in bed," she tells him. "But I know I'm not going to get it until you're done." Her voice makes the words fondly exasperated rather than cutting. "Is it him again?"

She doesn't have to specify who she's asking about. There's practically a capital letter on that 'him.' "I hope so," Jack confesses. "Something is really fishy with this one."

"Well, don't forget that coffee isn't sleep," she tells him. "You remember what the doctor said. If you manage to go first I'll never forgive you."

"Don't even joke," Jack says sternly. He doesn't like the way she talks about her death now, like it's a slight inconvenience on the horizon, inevitable and unpleasant but entirely expected. "I love you."

"I love you too, Tiger. Go get 'em."

They still don't have an ID on victim two by the time he makes it back to the labs.

"John Doe is clean," Beverly tells him when he walks in. She's grinning ear to ear. "But I got some hairs off Porter."

"That's my girl," Jack says, and claps her on the shoulder. It's huge. They've never gotten this much from a Ripper kill before. "Any follicles?"

"Two," she says. "I don't think it's our guy, though. The hairs were too thick."

Jack frowns at her as she leads to the microscope. "Human hair doesn't top 180 micrometers, and it's usually much less. This one's 200. Some of the strands are particolored, too." She waits for Jack to finish his examination. When he looks up at her, she raises her eyebrows. "This is animal fur. At a guess I'd say dog."

The feeling in Jack's gut gets worse. "Have you heard anything from Will tonight?"

"Since he went back to the dorms? No. I hope he's sleeping off whatever that weird reaction at the scene was." Beverly shakes her head as she puts her tools down and strips off her gloves. "This case has been so rough on him. I hope he takes you up on the mandatory psych and doesn't just walk out after all."

Jack looks around the lab. The only other person in the room is Alvarez, sitting at a computer and typing busily away with headphones on. Jack closes his eyes and exhales slowly until his lungs are empty, and then he opens his eyes and breathes in. He motions Beverly closer. "This doesn't go further than us," he says. He knows he's an asshole for this - Beverly and Will are something like friends, and she's going to feel awful doing this. Still, she's the best at her job, and she has the professional integrity not to let friendship get in her way. And if she's his friend, she's more likely to keep quiet. "Did we pick up fur samples when we were searching Will's house?"

Beverly just stares at him for a long time. "I might still have some."

Jack nods once, then looks away, ashamed. But it has to be done.

*

In the morning, John Doe becomes Esmail Arya, second-in-command at a family owned architectural supply business. Will doesn't show at Jack's office, and he doesn't report to psych as ordered. He also doesn't answer his phone, which is going straight to voicemail. When Jack calls the trainee dorms they haven't seen or heard from Will at all.

Will's phone continues to go straight to voicemail right up until Jack pulls into his driveway. His car isn't there, and when Jack peers in the front windows he doesn't see any sign that Will's around. There are dishes in the sink and the bed covers are rumpled, but there's no telling how long they've been like that.

He takes a report about Arya by phone on his way to Baltimore. Nothing sounds interesting, or fishy, but he'll know more once he talks to the man's wife and father. His next stop shouldn't take long - if Will is there he'll drag him along, and if not, he'll talk to Dr. Lecter for a bit about whatever is going on with Will. He's about done with this shit.

Jack has been flexible. Will has been in recovery for a serious illness with mental health complications, and he's technically been out on extended leave under the FMLA. He's humored Will's bizarre comings and goings, his weird behavior, and it's set a dangerous precedent. Now that Will's properly back on the clock, Jack is not going to be putting up with it. He's also not going to let Will burn out and self-destruct. Whatever he's been doing to himself and Dr. Lecter is going to stop, for Will's own good and probably Dr. Lecter's too. For a lot of reasons, Jack is going to feel much better all around with Will in protective custody.

He tries calling ahead when he gets to Baltimore - far enough for polite warning, not far enough out to give Will the chance to bolt. No one answers the phone at Dr. Lecter's house, or his office, and his cell also goes to voicemail. It could be nothing. They could be laying around in bed, despite it being after ten on a Tuesday morning.

The front door is ajar when Jack pulls into Dr. Lecter's driveway.

The skin on the back of Jack's neck prickles and his hands start to sweat. He calls in his location and checks his gun before approaching the house.

"Dr. Lecter," he calls with his back to the door jamb and his gun in hand. "This is Jack Crawford of the FBI."

There's no response.

"Dr. Lecter, your door is open and I am concerned for your safety. I'm coming inside."

Still no response. Jack closes his eyes for a moment and curses to himself. Then he makes himself go in.

It's completely silent inside. None of the lights are on, and most of the curtains are drawn from the night. Jack has never been in this house without an invitation, never seen the foyer without warm lamps lit or heard his footsteps echo on the hardwood without faint classical music in the air. It feels wrong, like being in a school at night or a nightclub in the daytime.

He finds candles in the dining room, burnt down to nubs with a thin waterfall of wax down the side of each holder. The table isn't set, but there's a fork on the floor underneath. There's no other sign of anything out of place, not there or in the kitchen. He's now as deep into the house as he has ever been invited, and while there's no sign of anything wrong there's also no sign of Dr. Lecter or indication of why the door was open.

He checks the garage and finds Dr. Lecter's car. Will's Volvo is parked beside it.

After that he doesn't have any compunctions about disturbing Dr. Lecter's privacy. He moves through the house quickly and efficiently, but aside from a surprising number of items that

would look more appropriate in Will's home than here, nothing seems out of place. But there's still no sign of Dr. Lecter.

There's some disarray in the master bedroom. It might be nothing. He wouldn't even consider it strange in someone else's home. Will's bed had looked worse, after all. It only looks strange or suspicious in comparison to the rest of the house, and through the lens of his knowledge of Dr. Lecter's habits and behavior.

Except, when he passes the bed, he spots a bit of bright color among the sheets. Jack moves a pillow out of the way to take a closer look.

It's a familiar silk paisley tie, twisted like it's been tied into a knot, and then cut through. It's also soaked through with blood.

"This is Crawford," he barks into his phone on the way down the stairs. "I need an APB on Agent Will Graham."

For Better, For Worse

Chapter Summary

> "There's trace blood all over the house," Beverly says, quietly. "Dr. Bloom, I like Will a lot, but there's blood *all over the house*. Especially the master suite. We're not just looking at one violent incident."

Jack gets an evidence team out to Dr. Lecter's house and sends another to Wolf Trap with Jimmy and Zeller in charge at the scene. He takes point at Dr. Lecter's, himself, and calls in Alana Bloom on the basis that she knows the man well and may be able to identify something out of place that no one else will notice.

It turns out Dr. Bloom is a little behind on gossip.

"Will and *Hannibal?*" she demands when he tells her, and then goes quiet on the phone for an awkwardly long time. "Well, I feel pretty out of the loop right now."

"They were being secretive about it until Will said something Sunday," Jack says. "I don't think anyone here knew, either."

"I knew," Beverly tells him when he hangs up. "Not who, exactly, but I knew he was seeing someone and that's where he'd been staying."

"Yeah," Jack says. "I thought you seemed underwhelmed about the whole big gay revelation. Maybe don't mention that to Dr. Bloom when she gets here."

"Lecter's prints were all over his house," she tells him. "Or I assume they were Lecter's, unless some other guy's been banging on his piano."

"Don't," Jack says flatly. He's not especially prudish, but he does his level best not to think about the agents under his supervision in that context, even when he isn't investigating them for homicide and possibly kidnapping.

"I keep going over and over the scene in my head, but Will never got close enough to the body for those hairs to have fallen off his clothes and ended up where they did. Maybe he shed them in the lab and the cleaning crew is slipping." She yanks at her own hair, pulling it into a tight ponytail so she can enter the house without shedding, herself.

"Beverly."

"I need more evidence than this," she says. "I'm here, okay? I'm looking. I'll do my damn job. But I'm choosing not to speculate further unless we get some kind of corroboration."

Jack nods and looks up at the sky. "Fair enough. For what it's worth I actually do hope I'm completely wrong, here."

Beverly shoots him a sympathetic look before gloving up and heading inside.

They turn up Will's prints all over the damn place, and more fluid traces than Jack is comfortable considering, also from all over the damn house. He's eaten at that table.

"Could be cooking oil," Beverly tells him when she catches his expression. "Or some vegetables floresce. Horseradish will even give a false positive to luminal - remind me to tell you that story sometime."

"Cooking oil."

"Or tonic water, maybe?" Beverly shrugs. "I'll let you know once we hit it with the semenogelin strips."

Bev gets a lot more serious once the luminal starts turning up hits in odd places. The blood on the tie Jack found was visible, so traces on the bed weren't unexpected. The trail of splatters up the stairs is concerning, the smeared handprints on the wall beside the bedroom door, and the way stains show up in the joins of the bedroom furniture and all over the master bathroom. Someone had wiped it all down until the visible traces were gone, but they hadn't followed up with bleach or anything else that would obscure the trace hemoglobin.

They collect traces of dried fluids and pick up hairs from the bed, and from brushes and combs. They don't have any samples on file for Dr. Lecter, after all - only what was collected at Will's house weeks before. They've just bagged and tagged a pair of toothbrushes when Dr. Bloom arrives, having taken the drive over to work herself up into a righteous fury.

"You have no reason to be digging through their lives like this!" she shouts at him in the middle of the dining room. "Believe me, I'm going to give Hannibal a piece of my mind, from a professional standpoint. I might even bring him up in front of the board if it seems like Will's been hurt by this relationship - but this?" She gestures violently toward the two agents carefully combing through Dr. Lecter's herb wall for anything that might be hidden there. "Hannibal is a deeply private person, Jack! How would you feel if you came home to something like this in your own house?"

"I have my reasons," Jack tells her. "And I'm not going to argue about it out here." She isn't technically part of the investigation, but she's his best bet for getting into Will's head, so he pulls her aside, into the pantry, so he can talk to just her and Beverly. "Tell her about the fur," Jack says once he shuts the door.

Beverly looks reluctant for a second, then bows her head. "We found hairs from two of Will's dogs on a body recovered yesterday."

"He doesn't even *have* his dogs right now," Dr. Bloom protests. "They've been at the FBI kennels!"

"It's not conclusive alone," Jack agrees. "But paired with Will's odd behavior the last few weeks, and some other circumstantial evidence-"

"Circumstantial evidence isn't admissible in court for a reason, Jack," Dr. Bloom tells him.

"Listen to me, please," Jack asks, fighting to keep his voice low. "Will showed up at a crime scene Sunday with busted knuckles and a black eye, and was perfectly happy telling us he'd gotten in some kind of fight with an ex or admirer of Dr. Lecter's. Now, our body yesterday showed up looking like it had been through the wringer - not the Ripper's usual style."

"The guy in the cage was beaten up," Beverly interjects.

"Christian Porter was beat up twice. I had Zee make some best guesses at timing on the tissue damage, and he gave me two days between the first time he was worked over and when he took the fatal blow to his head. That matches up with what Porter's mother told me - he came home Sunday morning after a night out, beaten bloody. I have security footage of Will speaking to our victim at eight-thirty that night, very aggressive body language, without a bruise on either of them. And when Porter got home four hours later he told his mother he'd been defending some friend of his who was being abused by a boyfriend in law enforcement."

"Being abused," Alana scoffs. She turns to pace away, among the racks of wine. "I can't believe you think *Will* would-"

"I know he would," Jack cuts her off. "I know he *did*. I saw the damage."

Alana whips around, her mouth open. He can tell she wants to shout him down in outrage, but she can't find the right words to counter him without more to go on.

"What kind of damage?" Beverly asks quietly. She's been in law enforcement long enough to know you can't predict domestic violence by appearances.

"Bad," Jack says. "Ligature bruising and lacerations to the throat and wrists. Some intense bite marks. I got a pretty good look before he covered it up, and there were stitches involved. He was hiding a limp and he could barely talk. Blamed it on a cold until his scarf slipped."

Beverly looks devastated. Alana just looks shocked. "Why didn't you do anything?"

"I took him aside and talked to him about confidential reporting of sexual violence," Jack says, quietly. "I approached as a friend and when that didn't work as a professional. All I could get out of him was that he'd consented to whatever happened and he wouldn't be pressing charges." At the sudden angry tears in Dr. Bloom's eyes, he adds, "that was before I had any idea who he was seeing. I had intended to talk to him somewhere more private than a crime scene once I got a few days together without a fresh atrocity to investigate. It wasn't my intention to leave him out to dry."

"I can't believe any of this," Alana hisses. "I've known Hannibal for *years*, Jack, he doesn't put up with shit from *anyone*. There's no way he'd stay with someone who hurt him."

"Whoa," Beverly says, before Jack can respond. "Hey, none of us want this to be true, doc, but that was pretty damn victim-blamey."

For a moment he thinks Dr. Bloom is going to tear into her, but she takes a deep breath and seems to regain her composure. "You're right. But the rest of it still stands, Jack. I've known them both a long time. None of this makes any sense to me."

"There's trace blood all over the house," Beverly says, quietly. "Dr. Bloom, I like Will a lot, but there's blood *all over the house*. Especially the master suite. We're not just looking at one violent incident."

Jack's phone rings, and he takes the opportunity to leave the two women talking for a few moments. "Crawford,"

"We've got trouble, boss," Zeller says. He's speaking quickly and quietly. "Easy one first - we found a high end chef's knife upstairs that doesn't look like it belongs in the house. It's got blood and Will's prints on it, and it was wrapped up in a shirt that looks Dr. Lecter's style, except for how he probably doesn't go around with blood and other miscellaneous bodily fluids on his clothes."

"Jesus," Jack says, and leans back against the table. Something rattles and falls, and he turns just in time to see Beverly fail to catch a cruet of some kind of dark liquid before it hits the floor and shatters.

"Damn," she says, and crouches to pick up the pieces in her gloved hands. Jack turns away again.

There had been an empty slot in the knife rack in the kitchen. It's the kind of thing they're all trained to look for at a household scene. "That's the easy one? What's the hard one?"

"Will's fridge," Zeller says. Jack's never heard him sound like this. Zee has a temper but he doesn't get freaked out. He's more likely to get angry than upset. "Jack, I found a liver soaking in a dish of buttermilk. I can't be sure until I get it to the lab but it's the right size to be human."

Jack goes cold in a wave that creeps down his spine and through his limbs. "No."

"Look, my Bobeh cooks liver and onions all the goddamn time, I know what a calf liver looks like," Zeller hisses. "And I fucking know what a human liver looks like, and the liver in Will's fridge looks a lot more like *that*."

"Oh, whoa," Beverly is saying. "Jeeze, did you know this was down here?"

"No, I have Crawford on the phone," Zeller says to someone. "What? Fuck - Jack, hang on."

Jack takes the phone away from his ear and presses his wrist against his forehead. "Jesus fucking Christ," he mutters. He glances over to where the women are opening a trap door in the pantry floor, wondering how he's supposed to tell them about this latest development.

"I bet he keeps his brewing equipment down here," Dr. Bloom tells Beverly. "He makes his own beer and wine."

"I always wanted a house with a secret room," Beverly says. "A hidden basement is so cool. Beer sounds like a good use to put it to." She pulls out her flashlight and climbs down the steps into the darkness, Dr. Bloom behind her.

"Jack," Zeller says on the phone. "I sent Jimmy and one of the local guys out to break into Will's barn. I don't know what they found, but Jimmy's puking on the lawn outside."

That's a bad, bad sign. "Jimmy eats his lunch while he watches you do autopsies."

"Yeah," Zeller says, sounding out of breath. "Shit, we should have looked out here sooner. He didn't unlock it when we searched the house, before."

Jack listens to Zeller hurrying across Will's property as he moves to peer down into the darkness where Beverly and Dr. Bloom have disappeared. When they find the lights, he can see them standing in the middle of a mostly open space. There's some furniture under cloths on one side, cleaning supplies in the corner, and what look to Jack like a pair of extra fridges or freezers. There's no sign of anything even remotely odd or suspicious, except for some kind of setup Dr. Bloom is inspecting that involves a lot of tubing.

"That bastard," she says, "holding out on me. He never said he had his own still."

On the other end of the phone, Zeller curses, and then Jack hears the phone hit gravel before the line goes dead.

For Richer, For Poorer

Chapter Summary

> "Do we really know Will killed him?" Dr. Bloom asks with sudden desperation. "Do we *know* Will killed *any* of these people? It's possible he's an accessory but not actually a killer, isn't it? If the Chesapeake Ripper had some kind of hold over him, physically or emotionally-"
>
> "You didn't see his barn," Jimmy mutters. "Accessory is *not* a strong enough word, even if he just lent the guy space and left him entirely to his own devices."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

> The officer who'd helped Jimmy break into the barn walks away from the scene without saying a word and isn't located for four hours. Later in the day, they hear he's quit the force entirely.
>
> Jack has the State Department flag Will and Dr. Lecter's passports, and gets their faces onto the local and national news. He hopes he isn't too late.
>
> They don't need the luminol for the barn. It's not like they could miss the blood still on the surfaces, on the ground, on the tools. The body on the table has been hacked into five large pieces, decapitated and then quartered like an animal. Beyond that, there are human limbs hanging from the ceiling on hooks, some with the skin on and some flayed, some covered in what the team ultimately decides is some kind of spice rub. The limbs have been brined and smoked, like Will was preparing a ham; sausages, too, hung up in strings like a cartoon butcher shop.
>
> There are more remains in the large chest freezer - two heads, brains removed and wrapped separately, bags of ground meat, cuts of muscle of a size that would fit a pan or a grill. Most of the organs are already gone, but they find a ziplock full of human eyeballs in the freezer and there is a bucket of intestines soaking in some kind of liquid underneath the table saw.
>
> On the plus side, now they know where Nick Boyle's body went - or part of it, anyway. In the end, they find remains or trace DNA from at least eight suspected Ripper kills, and six other people they can't identify.
>
> When the decision is made later that day to put Will Graham on the Most Wanted list; he goes straight to number one.
>
> *

"I'm confused," Jimmy looks it too, with his face screwed up. "Do we think Will's been the Ripper the whole time?"

"It's actually possible," Beverly says quietly. "The first Chesapeake Ripper kill we know of was found a year after he started his master's at George Washington." She looks apologetically over at Dr. Bloom. "The timing works out."

"Jesus," Jack mutters. They're all standing around in the small conference room near his office. Despite the comfortable leather chairs, none of them seem to want to sit down. Jack knows he can't be still, with everything he's feeling right now. Pacing the room is helping him not to explode.

"If that's true, he deserves an academy award," Jimmy says. "He fainted at two of the crime scenes."

"What if it's DID?" Beverly asks.

"Multiple personalities... " Jimmy muses, sounding a little to enthusiastic about this particular curveball. "Wow, that's a hell of a thing to prove in court."

"I don't think someone with that fractured a psyche could keep from being caught for so long," Dr. Bloom says. "Dissociative Identity Disorder isn't like you see in the movies. There's still a lot of debate about whether it's even a real condition. There's some work out that suggests it might be an experience created as an artifact of therapy, like 'recovered' memories…" She trails off, staring into space. "Though I guess it's a bit like psychosomatic blindness. It doesn't matter if it's all in your head - you still can't see."

Beverly makes a frustrated sound and flops into one of the chairs. "Well, we know he'd gone over to the dark side by the time Nick Boyle was killed."

"We also don't know when he was killed," Jimmy says. "We know when he was last seen alive, but it's hard to date remains that have been frozen. He could have been stuck wherever Lass was hidden, and Will only killed him last week."

"Do we really know Will killed him?" Dr. Bloom asks with sudden desperation. "Do we *know* Will killed *any* of these people? It's possible he's an accessory but not actually a killer, isn't it? If the Chesapeake Ripper had some kind of hold over him, physically or emotionally-"

"You didn't see his barn," Jimmy mutters. "Accessory is *not* a strong enough word, even if he just lent the guy space and left him entirely to his own devices."

"He was definitely eating them," Beverly says, quietly. "There were dishes and utensils in his sink with his prints, his saliva, and DNA from Henry Warren."

That makes everyone go quiet. In the silence, Jack looks over at Zeller, who has been leaning against a cabinet in silence this whole time, with his arms tight around himself, staring at the floor. "Thoughts, Zee?"

"He never went to see Miriam." Zeller's voice is quiet and tense, with a cold kind of anger Jack doesn't think he's ever seen from him before. "Our one direct link to the Ripper, our best shot to find out anything about him, to get into his head, and Will never once went to see her." He looks up at them, his mouth tight and eyes hard. "He thought she might be able to identify him. That means whenever he got involved, however this started, it was before we found her. There was some kind of contact. He knew where she was. He knows what happened to her."

Everyone stares back at him in silence. Everyone but Jack, who can't stand to stay in that room a minute longer. He walks out the door and shuts himself up in his office, slumped in his chair with his head in his hands.

Alana finds him after a while. She brings him a vegetable wrap and some chips from the cafeteria. "We all ordered vegetarian," she tells him. "The staff were actually really confused. They were completely out of salad and fish. Didn't know why no one in the bureau seemed to want roast beef or ham and cheese today. When I left, Beverly was trying to stop Jimmy from explaining to everyone."

Jack unfolds the paper from around the wrap and opens up the tortilla. He pokes through the contents before reassembling it and taking a bite. "Thanks."

She smiles weakly at him and sits down across from him, hands clasped together in her lap. "I'm having a really hard time with this. I know you must be, too. Between finding out about Will and worrying about Hannibal-"

"I don't need therapy, Dr. Bloom," Jack tells her. It comes out harsher than he intended, so he winces. "Sorry."

"You are very much entitled to be in a bad mood," she tells him, the corner of her mouth twisting a little. "It's been that kind of day."

Jack tilts his head in acknowledgment of her point, his mouth full of rabbit food.

"Brian went to go talk to Miriam Lass. He said he wanted to be the one to tell her what happened today, and he wanted to show her a picture of Will if she was up for it."

That makes Jack frown as he swallows. "Really. I forgot he'd been to see her."

"According to Beverly and Jimmy, he usually swings by after work. They play mahjong."

Jack blinks at her for a moment, unsure how to react to that. Ultimately he just decides to focus on his sandwich.

"I had a thought," Alana says. "I'm about as close a friend as Hannibal has, in terms of sharing personal information. I usually know if he's seeing someone. But he didn't tell me anything about Will, so I don't have much insight, there. I can't imagine he told any of our other friends, either."

Jack sighs and nods. He'd hoped, between her knowledge of Hannibal and her knowledge of Will, that she'd be able to piece together some sort of profile that might help track them down. She'd given the task force some good ideas about the kind of places Will might go to ground, but she hadn't been able to say much about their relationship, and how much danger Hannibal was in.

"There's someone else you should talk to," she tells him, and waits for him to wipe his hands before she passes him a business card.

*

"Anything specific I could tell you about Hannibal or his relationships would be a direct breach of patient confidentiality," Dr. Du Maurier tells him, pressing the rim of her wine glass to her chin, thoughtfully. "I could lose my license."

She seems incredibly calm for someone who's just been told their patient has been kidnapped by a cannibalistic serial killer.

"Doctor," Jack tries again, "please. Hannibal is a reasonable man. If we find him he isn't going to file a complaint against you for sharing information that might save his life."

"You're assuming you know him well enough to predict his behavior," she says. She leans back against the sink and crosses her arms, holding her glass by the stem. She's a beautiful woman, and appears coolly professional even at the late hour.

"I consider him a friend," Jack says. "I've eaten at his table. We've worked together as colleagues and he's helping my wife work out her feelings surrounding a cancer diagnosis."

"And yet," she says, "he did not confide in you about his relationship with Will Graham, let alone any relationship woes he may have had."

"Both deeply private matters," Jack points out, "and in the case of the latter, deeply upsetting. He also may have felt threatened."

Du Maurier hums and sets down her empty glass. "Threatened. Yes. I would say he felt threatened by Will Graham. Also intrigued and infatuated." She pulls a bottle off of the counter and holds the neck out toward Jack in offer. He's sorely tempted, but he shakes his head anyway. It seems to take her forever to refill her glass, and Jack waits as patiently as he can. "Agent Graham represented a serious change to Hannibal's status quo. He told me that he'd never met anyone like Graham. He was quite certain of that from the moment *you* introduced them."

Jack tries not to show a reaction to that little barb, but it sinks in deep.

"I saw him shortly after that for a session," Du Maurier says. "Hannibal's reaction to that meeting was quite unusual for him. He became utterly fixated. Obsessed with connecting with a man he believed could understand and appreciate him. He poured all his considerable focus into becoming Will Graham's friend." She sips her wine.

"But he became more than his friend," Jack prompts.

Du Maurier tilts her glass to him and raises one neatly arched brow in acknowledgement. "The day that Hannibal's patient was killed, there was a period of time when he believed that Will Graham had died as well. That affected Hannibal far more than the threat to his own life. It surprised him, how strongly he felt. It became very clear to him that he preferred a world and a life with Will Graham in it to one without. Hannibal made up his mind to pursue something long term at around the time Graham was hospitalized for encephalitis."

Jack thinks back to the night he found Hannibal at Georgia Madchen's bedside, book forgotten in his lap and head bowed while she slept. They had sat and talked in the darkness for a while. It was the most open and vulnerable he'd ever seen the other man. Hannibal had asked after Bella's health and well-being as well, but it was speaking of Will that had made Hannibal look like a kicked puppy. He'd confessed how he felt he had failed his friend, and he'd been so broken up about it that Jack had put a hand on his back and promised he'd try to sort everything out.

Jack was the one who'd told Will about that. He'd told him how vulnerable Hannibal was. If Jack had kept his mouth shut Hannibal would be safe at home right now.

"The last time I saw Hannibal," Jack confesses, "he was trying to hide injuries that seemed to indicate to me that he'd been severely assaulted. He told me that they'd been received consensually."

"He seemed very proud of the bruises when they started showing up," Du Maurier tells him, looking amused. "I have no reason to believe they weren't consensual. If anything, he seemed thrilled to have such clear and physical proof that his seduction had succeeded."

The thought makes Jack more than a little queasy. He can remember returning to the barracks as a young man with a pink mark on his throat and faint little fingernail welts on the backs of his shoulders. He'd been proud and embarrassed when the other men noticed. The nausea comes from trying to connect that experience to the damage he'd seen on Hannibal's skin. He can't imagine ever hurting Bella like that; he can't even stomach the thought. He can't imagine Bella ever wanting to do something like that too him, or himself letting her.

Du Maurier seems to recognize his unease. "That sort of sexual play isn't necessarily harmful, in and of itself. Most of the people who enact it are normal, healthy, well adjusted and successful."

"I'm actually aware of that," Jack says dryly. "Though I have a hard time wrapping my head around it. In my line of work, you see some pretty awful things when people get their sex and violence wires crossed." He thinks about what she said. "You really got the impression he was happy in the relationship, despite the wounds?"

"I think," Du Maurier says, "that he enjoyed the *experience* of Will Graham's attention. As complicated an experience as that was."

She keeps using the past tense. "Do you think he's dead?"

"It's possible," she allows. "If he were to come to harm, it would certainly be at Graham's hands. He simply would not allow himself to be so vulnerable to anyone else." She shifts her weight and sets her empty glass down on the counter behind her.

Something about the way she says that makes the hair on the back of Jack's neck prickle. "Do you think Hannibal might be with Will of his own volition?" Will's threat to take Hannibal and run comes back to Jack with a wave of cold fury, and Jack has to hide his hands in his coat pockets because he can't stop himself from pulling them into fists.

"Volition is a funny word," Du Maurier muses. "Easier to say choice… but what would his choices have been, and under what circumstances? If a monster and a man elope together, are they both guilty of the same crimes?" She picks up the wine bottle from the counter and upends it over her glass, letting the last few drops splash to the bottom. "What level of knowledge is required for culpability, and what level of physical or emotional duress would excuse it? Hannibal places *tremendous* value on Will Graham's presence in his life. And from what Hannibal told me, it seems likely that Will Graham feels similarly.

"Tell me, Agent Crawford… What would you do - what would you *endure* - to prevent the loss of the most important person in *your* world?"

*

When Jack opens the kitchen door at about two am, Bella is sitting at the table with his bathrobe on over her own, nursing a pot of what smells like that awful tea with all the flowers and vitamins in it. She looks exhausted, and like the best thing he's ever seen.

"You shouldn't have waited up," Jack tells her, but he's grateful when she steps into his arms and presses close to him, her cheek against his shoulder.

God, he loves her *so much*.

Chapter End Notes

I keep telling people I'm evil and they keep not believing me for some reason?

Also, I slipped and accidentally a new ship, maybe

In Sickness and In Health

Chapter Summary

> "We know Will, though," she says. "We can *find* Will. And we can track his history, too. Find out where he's been, where their paths intersected."
>
> Jack takes another deep breath and tells himself she's right. They're all looking at this personally, because it *has* been personal. If it were anyone but Will, Jack would be thrilled to have so much evidence dumped in his lap, no matter how grisly. The Ripper has a known associate. That's huge.

"Will has an alibi for Jeremy Olmsted," Beverly tells Jack when he walks into the lab.

Jack is still working on his first cup of coffee. "What?" He takes in her pulled-back hair, her rumpled t-shirt, her slacks the same as yesterday. The only makeup she seems to be wearing is smudged eyeliner or mascara, like she's washed her face but didn't have the special soap or cream or whatever for the eye stuff. "Have you been here all night?"

"Will can't be the Ripper," she says, ignoring his other question. "Or he can't be the only one. He was in California for a conference on entomology for the four days around the time of the murder, and he never left the hotel. He put three meals and about four drinks a day on the bureau's card and gave two talks, and he got into some kind of knock-down, drag-out with Arnie Pilcher about flyspeck analysis in the hotel bar on the third night, right in the middle of the most likely window for time of death. So he definitely didn't kill Olmsted. He may have killed some of them, but he didn't kill them all. He isn't the Ripper."

Jack blinks at her. "You stayed up all night trying to prove him innocent."

The sound that comes out of Beverly is so loud and sudden that Jack jumps and almost loses his coffee. She makes a frustrated gesture that knocks the clip halfway out of her hair, so that most of the strands spill down one shoulder. "I stayed up all night trying to make any of this make sense! I know he's not innocent, Jack, I know what the evidence says, but I also know he can't have been the only one. Not this whole time!"

Jack breathes deep, trying to keep his emotional response under control until he can sort it out. None of that would help now, anyway. "Okay. Not Olmsted. Tell me what that means."

"He was with us almost constantly from the first effigy murder to the second," Beverly says. "Aside from bathroom breaks and that hour or so he went missing to take a phone call. He even slept in your office instead of going home. He's got weaker alibis for two of the others, and we might be able to turn up more. His being a fucking hermit isn't helping. But Olmsted is rock solid, and that's important, because we found his DNA in that barn. It means he didn't

kill everyone on the Ripper's docket, and he didn't kill everyone whose remains we found there."

Something in Jack's chest squeezes tight. "We know he killed some of them." They'd found a shovel under Will's front steps with Porter's DNA, Will's prints, and a blade that matched the cracks In Porter's skull, and luminol had turned up Porter's blood on the porch. "Even if he didn't kill *any* of them, Beverly, he's still an accomplice. He was neck deep in this."

"Yeah," she says, suddenly fierce. "He was. He is. But guess what, Jack? If he wasn't the only one, then there's still a Ripper. And we've never been able to find the Ripper because we don't know anything about him. Will might even have been fucking with our profile for god knows how long, or misdirecting us in other ways. Remember the whole organ-harvesting tangent after Sylvestri?"

The thought had occurred to Jack, too. Even before he'd brought Will into the department they'd been using his publications, and maybe a quarter of the BAU had been through one of his classes at some point under the continuing education guidelines.

"We know Will, though," she says. "We can *find* Will. And we can track his history, too. Find out where he's been, where their paths intersected."

Jack takes another deep breath and tells himself she's right. They're all looking at this personally, because it *has* been personal. If it were anyone but Will, Jack would be thrilled to have so much evidence dumped in his lap, no matter how grisly. The Ripper has a known associate. That's huge.

He hands Beverly his coffee. She looks like she needs it even more than he does, and the machine near his office is infinitely better than the one down here. "I'll get Bloom back in."

"Good," Beverly says. "She's had time to cry it out. She'll be better today if she's past the denial. Put her with me or Jimmy, though - she and Brian will just fight. He's too deep into this."

He runs into Jimmy at the espresso machine near his own office, in fresh clothes and freshly showered. He's distressingly awake and chipper, perhaps owing to having staked the machine out for however long he's been waiting. "Talk to Beverly yet?" Jack asks him.

"She texted me fourteen times before dawn," Jimmy tells him. "Which got me thinking - Will's car and Lecter's car were both in Lecter's garage. I did some digging and neither of them registered any other vehicles. Will has two boats and a trailer but those were accounted for, and the only one that would have been big enough for some kind of getaway needs some serious work to make it seaworthy, anyway."

Jack listens while he loads the machine and gets the water heating. Today is going to be a triple americano day at least, if he's lucky. "So how did they leave Lecter's house?" He asks, once he understands where Jimmy is going.

"A very good question! And one I don't know the answer to. Laura's looking into traffic cameras nearby, in case we can get a vehicle for them, but I thought of something even better.

We've been looking for two men, Jack. Maybe we should be looking for three."

Jack has to put his cup down. "You think they took Lecter together."

"I don't think the Ripper would have let Will run off with Lecter somewhere if he knew anything about it, and I figure he probably knew a lot more about what Will was up to at any given time than we did, so yeah. Listen, Jack, you're in a nice, heterosexual monogamous thing and you have been since the dawn of time or whatever, so take it from an old queer - love triangles can get *messy*. I've never sent anyone a corpse, but if I'd been giving somebody flowers every few days while they were maybe living with another guy - and have we confirmed that, by the way? Was he actually with Lecter all that time we couldn't find him?"

"We're not sure yet," Jack admits.

"Damn. Okay, if I'd been sending little presents to a boyfriend, or an ex, or a potential, and they decided to up and leave town with some other guy they'd been seeing, and I was as serious about him as the Ripper looks to be about Will - I mean, Jack, I'm not *Will Graham* or anything, thank god, but those last two bodies, in the church--"

"Yeah," Jack reluctantly agrees. "At the goddamn altar." He fills his cup and dumps in three packets of sugar before topping up with hot water.

"Which looks an awful lot like some kind of fucked up *proposal*," Jimmy points out, "and would make more sense if it were just Will missing, but it looks like he left there and went straight to Lecter's. So in our loose analogy, if I'd gone all out, got down on one knee in public and everything, and the guy immediately went home to his other thing, I'd lose it. Cue big dramatic shouting match with thrown drinks and name calling, maybe some hair pulling, or if you're the Chesapeake Ripper, probably a completely different kind of tantrum."

Jack thinks while he blows on his coffee, until it's cool enough at the surface to risk a sip. "It would help to work out a clearer timeframe for Will and Dr. Lecter's relationship. But I think you may be on the right track. I talked to Will the night we caught Abel Gideon. He'd cut Dr. Lecter off pretty cold a little while before, and Dr. Lecter was kind of distraught over it. At the time I didn't even think about it as a possible romantic situation." At Jimmy's snort, Jack rolls his eyes. "I know."

"I'll save the lecture on heterosexism for later, shall I?"

"I'll take it as read," Jack agrees. The rest feels like a confession, so Jack hides behind his coffee cup when he delivers it. "I kind of suggested Will was in the wrong and ought to make up with him. Maybe twelve hours later we had a nice dramatic Ripper murder that Will showed up to in someone else's clothes, and telling me he'd spent the night in Baltimore at a friend's place."

Jimmy makes a long, drawn out sound of interest. "Wow. I don't know what else you think you need to reconstruct, Jack. Will hooks up with Lecter, Ripper *immediately* drops a body on us-"

"After the Ripper led Will right to Gideon," Jack adds.

"Which was so very thoughtful and helpful of him-"

"Will took forever on the reconstruction. When I finally went in to get him, he was crying."

Jimmy's mouth snaps shut at that, his eyes a little wide. "I didn't realize."

"He recovered well," Jack says. "But if I hadn't gone in there after him I think he would have sat there staring at Crane's body all day."

"We had to literally haul him away from the next one," Jimmy points out. "I think he wanted to get in the coroner's van with it, and he kept trying to touch it until Zeller threw him out of the morgue. Jack, how did this guy ever pass psych evaluation for field work?"

Jack takes a longer drag on his coffee now that its had the chance to cool a little. "He didn't. Not the first time, or the second." Jimmy just stares at him, keeping him on the hook. "The third time, I sent him to Dr. Lecter. He passed with flying colors."

"Well, fuck," Jimmy says, which Jack figures is accurate. The disciplinary review of this whole mess is going to be a bear. Jack will consider himself lucky if he can keep his job until they catch Will and the Ripper, until they save Hannibal. After that, he can take early retirement if he has to. It will be good to be with Bella when she needs him.

"I'll add your thoughts to the APB," Jack says. "If Will and the Ripper are working together it makes more sense that Dr. Lecter seems to have gone without much of a fight." He pulls out his cell, ready to call downstairs, when a thought occurs to him. "But if the Ripper wanted to elope with Will, why would he help him bring along a third wheel?"

Jimmy makes an unhappy little noise. "Well, that's the thing. Lecter could be a hostage for Will's cooperation, or it could be a lot worse than that. I think it's probably likely we're going to turn up Lecter's body pretty soon. And it's going to be ugly, Jack."

*

Dr. Bloom - Alana - brings him pasta salad with fat, sautéed shrimp in it, this time, which is a huge improvement over the veggie wrap. He's been in meetings all day, coordinating the manhunt, and has so far managed to forage a honey bun and another triple americano, so he's grateful.

"I went to see Abigail Hobbs," she says when she sits down. She's quieter today. Subdued, if not calm. Beverly might have been right about her needed to cry it out. "I wanted to be the one to break to her what had happened. She really likes Hannibal. Not surprising, I suppose, since he saved her life."

"How did that go?" Jack asks. He can't imagine the answer is 'well.'

"She already knew, when I got there," Alana admits. "It's everywhere, Jack. Lounds has been breaking updates since yesterday afternoon, and even the reputable places have picked up a lot of the lurid details. Some of her photos were in the Washington Post this morning."

"Goddamnit," Jack growls. "I had *four people* posted there last night."

"The photos were taken in the daytime," Alana tells him. "The lighting was perfect. You could see all the little details." Her mouth twists up in a lopsided, humorless smile. "Thank you for not letting me in there yesterday. I'm sorry I yelled."

"You were very much entitled to be in a bad mood," Jack tells her, which earns a better smile, or at least an attempt at one.

"So was Abigail," Alana admits. "There was a lot going around about her father's case. About her friend Marissa and the copycat murders. I think she was a little bit relieved to know Nick Boyle was dead, though, after the way he attacked us at her house. She had the weirdest look when I confirmed we'd found his body there." She sighs. "She's a smart kid. Very emotionally perceptive. I don't think it was a secret from her that Will wanted to look after her, take care of her. If Will killed Nick Boyle that makes him the second man in her life to use her as a motive for murder."

Jack ponders that heavy thought while he chews his garlic bread. "I hadn't thought about that angle."

"Lucky you," Alana drawls. "Abigail certainly has. She had a lot of questions I couldn't answer about Will and Hannibal's relationship - and you ought to know, Lounds went as lurid as possible with all that. Abigail was mad about that. She showed a lot of empathy for Will. I think, after what happened with her father, she's afraid of the idea of the FBI swarming in guns blazing before Will gets a chance to speak for himself. She's worried that the Ripper pressured him into his part in things."

Jack frowns. "You know that way of thinking just adds fuel to the fire, when it comes to the possibility she was an accessory to her father's crimes."

Alana's eyes go narrow and hard. "Can you put that to rest, Jack? Even if that were true, and for the record I don't think it is, you'd never get a conviction for it. She's a minor child who would have been acting under duress from a dangerous, violent, mentally ill parent. And she's my patient, which means I'd be called to stand and testify, and I would fight you on this one every step of the way. That girl has been through enough, and she's not a danger to anybody."

Jack sighs and sets his fork down. Finding the link between the Ripper and the Boyle and Shurr murders may not have shut that avenue down, but it definitely opened some other possible routes. "I think you're right about the conviction, at least."

"Try chasing one white whale at a time," Alana suggests. "That's more than most people manage."

Jack hums, trying for noncommittal. He eats his last few bites of zucchini and one lone penne noodle. "Hey, I have a question for you. Something we haven't considered, I don't think."

She sits back in her chair, crossing her legs and folding her hands on her knee. "Okay," she says, "shoot."

"We've been asking you where Will would go. What kind of places he might hide in, what places he might have ties to, or feel comfortable in. But what about Dr. Lecter?"

The face she makes one of intense confusion. "He's a hostage, Jack. He's not going to be choosing the destination."

"Okay," Jack concedes, "but hypothetically. Say Will was trying to take him somewhere he thought he'd be happy, or blend in. Does he have property in Europe? Vacation home somewhere in the states we haven't turned up, yet?"

"I don't think he's been back to Lithuania since he was a kid," Alana says. "It wasn't even Lithuania when he left; it was part of the Soviet Union. I don't think he has attachments there. He grew up in France and Italy, and he has an aunt in Japan. I wouldn't have any idea how to go about finding her, if she's alive. Maybe you'd turn up something in an address book? I forget her name, but it was very Japanese sounding."

Jack makes a couple notes for himself.

"What's got you looking at this angle?"

"Something Dr. Du Maurier said," Jack admits. "She asked what Hannibal might be willing to do to keep Will in his life. Or Hannibal might not have realized what was going on. He might have contributed to his own disappearance without knowing he was putting himself in danger. The day before they disappeared, Will told me Hannibal would run away with him, if he asked."

Alana looks off into space for a moment. "I kind of hope that's the case," she admits. "I don't think Hannibal would have left without closing up his practice, but I can imagine scenarios where Will talked him into it being some kind of emergency. If he said the Ripper had found them, maybe, and that they had to go right away to stay safe. I'd have expected to get a call within a day or two, though, with a list of people to refer, if nothing else." She stares down at her hands. "But I can't help preferring a version of events where Hannibal thinks he's safe and happy on a surprise vacation to one where he's in constant fear, or pain, or maybe even dead by now. I'd rather he be happy and safe right up until we find them."

Jack can't help but agree. He also can't help thinking about captor bonding and battered person syndrome. There are a lot of ways in which they could be too late to help Hannibal, and the likelihood of each of them gets worse with every hour that passes.

*

Four days after the manhunt for Will Graham begins, a terrorist attack in Los Angeles kills two people, and Will is bumped down the Most Wanted list to number two.

Til Death Do Us Part

Chapter Summary

> "I am thinking," she says, "these handsome men, very good suits, they choose good books, and money, yes? And then, the touching -" she grips Jack's bicep to demonstrate, and puts her other hand the small of his back. It's a possessive, steering hold. "Oh, I think, gay, so sad. Happy for them, sad for me!" She smiles a quick, self-deprecating little flash of a smile that doesn't reach her eyes. "But they pay, and I see-" she taps Will's photo. "This one. Very good suit, but blood on the shirt. All the - the this part." She points at her wrist. "Under the suit, all over with blood, still wet."
>
> It's them. He's found them.

Chapter Notes

> Who's been paying attention to the chapter titles? How about those archive warnings?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Interpol notices go out; Red for Will, Blue for Hannibal. That's the good news. If they're spotted by police in 190 member countries, if their prints are run, if they're stopped at a border check and correctly identified, Will will be arrested and Hannibal detained.

The bad news is a shoot-out in Tulsa that leaves three cops dead. Will is down to six on the Most Wanted list by the time Jack manages to track down Murasaki Lecter and get a call through.

"I have not seen or heard from Hannibal in many years," she tells him, her voice over the phone quiet and delicately accented. She speaks with the careful precision of someone who knows a language well but learned it first from books. "We were close, when he was a boy, but as he became a man we both came to realize that we had nothing left to offer the other that would be accepted. We parted ways when he began school - he to Florence and I to my family home - and I have not seen him since."

"Have you spoken at all?" Jack asks, desperate and baffled. Alana had said Hannibal spoke of his only living relative fondly.

"No. He sometimes sends me things. Packages and letters. I don't open them. It has been two years since the last one."

There's a hell of a story there, but from Murasaki's tone he knows he's not going to get much more out of her about it. "Do you have any idea of places he might travel to? Back to Lithuania, maybe -"

She laughs, bitter and hard. "Oh, no. He will never go back there, I think. Once was enough to get what he needed."

"What do you mean?" Jack asks her.

"I will send you a list of properties and accounts his parents and my husband left to him," Murasaki says, ignoring the question. "My attorney will have the paperwork. I never cared to find out what he did with them."

"Thank you," Jack tells her. "That would be very much appreciated." He hesitates for a moment, suspecting she is about to end the call. "If I may… I'm a little surprised you haven't asked why the FBI is looking for your nephew."

There is a quiet sound of breath and a rustling of cloth on the other side of the line. "I would prefer not to know what he's done," Murasaki tells him, voice tight. "Please give me your email address so that I may have my attorney send you the documents. After that, I won't be able to help you further."

It's a very strange response. It's a strange conversation, over all. Jack is feeling that ugly tension in his gut, again.

*

Twenty-three days after Will and Hannibal disappear, Parks Service turns up five bloated corpses covered in lacquer. It takes the team more than two weeks to find the silo full of bodies, the graveyard of missing cars, and the man responsible. For those two weeks, they barely have time to think about Will Graham at all.

James Grey's 46 bodies make Will's barn into just another crime scene.

Forensic accounting tears through Will and Lecter's accounts. Will's seem pretty simple, but there are a few surprises. They find small monthly payments going to Mobile, to what turns out to be a lawn maintenance company that cuts back the brush on a Chickasaw, Alabama property with nothing on it but a concrete slab and hook-ups for a trailer that doesn't seem to have been there for a long time. No one's entirely sure what to make of that.

Dr. Lecter's accounts are a labyrinthine nightmare defended by high-dollar lawyers and accountants in several countries. It's easy enough to get a court order for the US records, but without the full cooperation of foreign banks on the other end, it's hard to figure out what was going on, or if anything is happening now. Murasaki's papers give them some hooks - cues on where to look, at least. There's a lot of activity between the accounts, but if his American bank records are anything to go by it could be automatic, either electronic or coordinated by financial proxies. Investment proceeds, monthly donations, membership fees, rents incoming and property upkeep going out. .

If the American accounts are anything to go by, Lecter is, or was, *fantastically* wealthy. There's more than enough money to spell motive for any crime they could think up.

If Will or the Ripper have access to those overseas accounts, they have everything they'll need to disappear for good. Money like that buys a lot of silence.

Jack has not given up. Jack will never give up.

*

Bella mostly stops leaving the house except for chemo and radiation appointments. On her bad days, he has to carry her to the car for those, and they're met at the doors with a wheelchair, which she hates. "I never mind having your arms around me," she tells him. "You carried me into the house; I'll let you carry me out. The damn chair is what makes me feel like an invalid."

Four weeks later she refuses to go to for treatments at all. Jack starts making arrangements for in home care, but Bella is definitive about just what help she'll accept. She doesn't want to drag things out.

It hurts. Obviously, the very fact she's hurting hurts, and the idea of losing her at all, but what Jack gets so angry about, specifically, is the choice she's making to cut their time short. He knows she doesn't want to suffer, and more than that she doesn't want to lose her dignity. And she thinks watching her die slowly will be worse for *him*, somehow, in a way the extra time won't balance.

In his eyes, she will always have her dignity. She will always be beautiful. If he could take her pain from her, bear it himself, he'd do it before his next breath. She seems happier, though, off the treatments. She coughs a little more, but she's more active, too. She gets a little of her spark back - a little of her shine.

When Miriam leaves the psychiatric facility to move in with her sister outside Waukegan, Illinois, she comes to the house to say goodbye. Zeller is driving her, and he lurks awkwardly in the kitchen while Miriam and Bella bond over some pretty dark humor. Jack takes him aside while they're occupied comparing scars.

"The Chicago field office could use some fresh blood," Jack tells him.

"They won't clear her," Zeller says. "Between the trauma and the physical requirements. She won't be happy at a desk job. She's out, Jack."

"I wasn't talking about Miriam," Jack says. At Zeller's stunned look, he adds, "I'll always want you on my team, Zee, but being on my team won't earn you any favors in the future. If you've got a chance here… Just think about it, okay? I may not have a lot of juice left here, but I can make that happen, if you want it."

*

When the break comes, it's small. Almost three months from the disappearances, and hardly definitive, but there's a hit on one of Lecter's stateside accounts - an attempted draft from a small French bank with just three branches, all in Paris.

Jack doesn't have the clout anymore to bring actual resources and attention to bear on it, with Kade Prurnell breathing down his neck, and with three other cases being considered more urgent and everyone hoping the Graham murders will vanish from memory just like their suspect and victim vanished off the map.

He gets what he can directly from his most discreet people. When Jacobson is done working her magic on the bank trail, he takes what he has to Jimmy Price before he leaves.

"The day before Will vanished," Jack tells him, "he told me that if he batted his eyes and asked Dr. Lecter to show him Paris, he'd be packed by nightfall."

"France doesn't extradite in possible death penalty cases," Jimmy points out.

"I'm not looking for an extradition," Jack admits. "Not yet, anyway. I just want to find Dr. Lecter. If he's suffering, if he dies, because of bureaucratic wrangling…"

"You could lose your job over this," At the look on Jack's face, Jimmy shrugs. "Okay, just, you know, throwing that out there."

"I'm out as soon as the paperwork goes through, anyway," Jack tells him. "Might as well use up my vacation time before they force me into retirement."

"Bev is gonna be *pissed*," Jimmy tells him seriously. "At you for going alone and at me for not telling her you're going alone so she can't chase after you."

"She's got her whole career ahead of her," Jack tells him. Someone has to stay out of it. But someone also needs to know where he's going. Jimmy will keep his mouth shut unless he absolutely shouldn't.

"Check in every day or two, will you? You're on your own over there."

"I think I can take Will, if I have to," Jack says, only half joking. Bringing his sidearm would have taken too long and required signatures from just the wrong people in Justice and State. What he doesn't tell Jimmy is that he knows a guy who knows a guy, and he won't be unarmed for long.

"Just be safe," Jimmy says. "Brian will cry if somebody eats you, and nobody wants that."

*

He goes home and packs. Bella kisses him goodbye for a long time, and he holds her tight. "I won't be long," he promises. "Gotta go bring back the only doctor we know who makes housecalls. And then I'll be underfoot driving you crazy all day and night."

"I could do with a little of that kind of crazy," she says, and fixes his tie. "And you could do with a rest, old man."

"Old man," he scoffs. "Could an old man do this?" He throws her over his shoulder to sweep her into the bedroom and almost misses his plane.

His back is killing him for the whole flight, but it's worth it.

*

Jack's always been a fan of shoeleather policing - getting people on the ground, knocking on doors, peering into alleys. He's learning it's a lot easier, though, if you have jurisdiction and you speak the language worth a damn. There's nothing at the one Paris property on Murasaki Lecter's list, but he didn't really think there would be. It's too obvious.

He starts his hunt in earnest with the main branch of the bank, showing around Will and Hannibal's photos to customers and employees alike. Management escorts him out ten minutes later, despite his pitch on protecting the public good and the French people. The other branches are quicker on the draw, once their bosses presumably talk to each other about the nosy American.

So, he starts working nearby locations. No one can stop him from asking after missing persons in the nearby cafes, bars, groceries, on the street. Where he finds someone to translate, people laugh at his story. He's not sure if it's the gay angle or the cannibalism, but even with his American badge to back him up, a certain percentage of the locals seem to think it's all a joke. He refrains from showing those people photos of Will's barn, but he definitely thinks about it.

Jack doesn't get a hit until day three, in a bookstore by the Seine, two blocks from the smallest bank branch. The cashier there flaps her hands nervously at him when she sees the photos and drags him out of the empty shop. She parks herself under the shade of an awning, in sight of the shop doors, and they speak in her broken but passable English and his truly terrible French, decades out of practice and never good to begin with.

"I am thinking," she says, "these handsome men, very good suits, they choose good books, and money, yes? And then, the touching -" she grips Jack's bicep to demonstrate, and puts her other hand the small of his back. It's a possessive, steering hold. "Oh, I think, gay, so sad. Happy for them, sad for me!" She smiles a quick, self-deprecating little flash of a smile that doesn't reach her eyes. "But they pay, and I see-" she taps Will's photo. "This one. Very good suit, but blood on the shirt. All the - the this part." She points at her wrist. "Under the suit, all over with blood, still wet."

It's them. He's found them. Somewhere in this city, somewhere nearby, and moving together. "Just these two men?" He asks, to be sure. "There wasn't a third?"

Her brow furrows for a moment, but she shakes her head. "No. Two."

"Did you call the police?"

"And say, this man has blood on his shirt?" She shrugs. "I sound crazy." She sucks aggressively at her cigarette and hugs herself, her free arm folded around her midsection and her shoulders bowed as if it's cold out instead of warm and clear. "And...I was scared. He

looked at me. His eyes were…." She trails off, looking intently into the air like she expects to find the word there. Finally, she just repeats herself. "I was scared."

"Thank you," he tells her. "This is very important. If you see them again please lock yourself in the back and call the police."

He tries to give her one of the printouts he's run off with their names and photos and the numbers for the FBI and the local police, but she looks confused. "Do you not want the address? The tall one, he orders the English and Italian books to be mailed."

Jack freezes with the paper held out between them. "You know where they are?"

She shrugs. "I know where the books will go. It is not far."

It isn't far, and she gives good directions. Between her guidance and his phone, he's standing on the corner looking down the street at a pristinely kept old house. If it's been divided into apartments by floor, like many of the buildings around, the homes might be on the more expensive end of middle-class. If the building is undivided, it's a mansion.

Hannibal is still alive, and still with Will. He was out in the city not long ago, under close supervision and control, but allowed to be seen and to speak to strangers in book stores. Jack has no idea if Will speaks French at all, let alone well enough to prevent Hannibal passing a message somehow through double meaning or careful wording. Either way, he seems fairly confident Hannibal won't bolt or ask for help, but he doesn't seem ready to let him out of sight, either.

Most importantly, Hannibal is alive and out with Will and no one else. Maybe the Ripper isn't with them. Maybe they skipped town to get away from him. It's always been a possibility.

Jack sits down on a bench under a tree with a newspaper for camouflage and thinks again about captor bonding. Stockholm. Battered person syndrome. He thinks about what Dr. Du Maurier said, about choice and complicity.

It's very likely he's going to have to arrest Hannibal Lecter as an accessory. He knows Will's location, and surely by now he knows that Will is a wanted man. It isn't up to Jack to work out whether his complicity has been justified by his fear for his life. That's for the State's Attorneys and the courts to hash out. But all that is dependent on getting Hannibal safely back to the United States.

He thinks about Murasaki Lecter's certainty that Hannibal must have done something wrong, if the FBI is looking for him, and frowns.

What he'd been able to dig up on Hannibal's past had been spotty and strange for the first twelve years. There had been a very posh school here in France, from his adoption until he was sixteen, and then university in Florence - three semesters to finish some premed requirements he couldn't test out of, and then straight to medical school. His mother had been an Italian citizen, and he seemed to have remained there through school and a few years after, until he'd been invited to Johns Hopkins.

Medical school at seventeen. What had caused Murasaki to cut ties with the boy when he was so young?

He could be overthinking things. It could have been political, or as simple as the gay thing, depressing as that is. Old money carries around a lot of old ideas and prejudices along with the other antique heirlooms, and doesn't Jack know *that* first hand from his years in Washington?

Du Maurier had asked him what he would do to keep the most important person in his life by his side. He sits there on a sunny street in Paris and thinks of Bella. Of what he'd be willing to trade for one more day together, with her healthy and whole. He closes his eyes and sees her walking by the water in Ostia in that white sundress and the stupid floppy hat that had blown over the railing and made him chase it down the shore.

What will Jack do if a fight breaks out and Hannibal comes down on Will's side?

Under the cover of his newspaper, he takes out the pistol his contact was able to pass him. He checks it over carefully even though he did that already this morning, before he left the hotel. Once he's sure it's loaded and in working order, Jack makes sure the safety is on and chambers a round.

He doesn't put it back in his bag. After a moment's thought, he tucks the barrel into his waistband just inside his jacket, which he leaves unbuttoned when he stands and crosses the street. He's going to want it close to hand.

"Jack!" Hannibal says when he opens the door. His pleased surprised is the same as it had ever been when Jack had dropped in on him at the office, but he keeps his voice near a whisper. He's dressed more casually than Jack is used to seeing him, with enough buttons undone on his shirt that Jack can see the terrible wounds to his throat have healed with just one long, thin scar from his jugular to his collarbone. The only injury Jack can see is a badly split lip - or the mark might be from teeth.

"Are you safe," Jack asks quickly. He hasn't taken his hand out of his jacket.

"Now that you're here?" Hannibal asks. "Yes. It's so good to see you," he says, quiet and sincere. "I knew you wouldn't give up. If anyone could find us, it would be you."

"Is Will inside?" Jack asks.

"Of course," Hannibal tells him. He backs up a few steps, out of the doorway, leaving Jack room to step inside as well. It's dark in the hallway after the brightness outside. Jack draws his gun and keeps it at his side, where Hannibal's eyes linger on it with concern. He keeps his body angled so that Hannibal and the end of the hallway are both in view. "He's in the study, through the kitchen. Jack, don't hurt him, please. He hasn't done me any great harm."

"Will he come peacefully?" Jack asks.

"He may. He considers you a friend, Jack." Hannibal peers out the door into the street beyond. "This will go easier, without the French police bashing down the door."

Jack turns, keeping his back to the wall and Hannibal at the edge of his sight. "Is anyone else in the house?"

"There is a dog," Hannibal tells him. "Asleep on the balcony I imagine, or she'd be here to greet you."

Of course there's a fucking dog. Well, it sounds like it won't be underfoot at least. The fewer variables the better. "The Ripper isn't here?" Jack asks, just to be sure. He motions Hannibal ahead of him and starts to move along the hall.

"We ran from Baltimore to leave the Chesapeake Ripper behind," Hannibal says softly.

"Do you know what Will's done?" Jack asks him. "What he is and what he's capable of?"

"Oh yes," Hannibal admits. He sounds sad. "I do know, now."

"Has he been hurting you?"

"Whenever he can. I try not to let him."

The hall opens onto a bright kitchen, all old architecture and new fittings, stainless steel beside ornamental wood paneling. It's warmer than Hannibal's kitchen back in Baltimore, with sunlight filtering through sheer yellow curtains in a shade that makes Jack think of baby ducks. He directs Hannibal toward the table as he cases the room, careful to keep himself at the apex of a triangle between Hannibal and the far doorway.

"Who are you talking to?" Will's voice asks from somewhere beyond another doorway. Jack has heard him irritated, frustrated, frightened, alarmed. This is something else. He brings his gun up to cover the entrance and listens to Will's steps coming closer. "I'm not doing it. No matter who you drag h-"

He freezes in the doorway, wide eyes on Jack. Jack is so stunned by his appearance that for a moment all he can do is stare back.

"Jack has found us," Hannibal says, sounding pleased again.

Will must have lost at least thirty pounds since Jack saw him last, maybe more. He's pale, with dark shadows under his eyes. His eyes dart frantically from Jack to Hannibal, to the gun. He looks like a damned junkie, twitchy and weak. "Get your hands where I can see them, Will," Jack orders, voice steady.

"No," Will says, but he's lookin at Hannibal. "Jesus Christ-"

"Will, get down on the floor and keep your hands where I can see them."

"I did say he would," Hannibal says, entirely cheerful now. His posture is relaxed and his hands empty at his sides. "He's the one person who would not give up on us, let us vanish into new lives abroad."

"Graham!" Jack barks, because Will still isn't looking away from Hannibal. "Hands where I can see them."

Slowly, reluctantly, Will raises his hands to the height of his shoulders, palms out. As his sleeves fall back, Jack can see deep bruising there, and sores as if the skin has been rubbed away.

Jack is suddenly no longer sure he knows what's going on here.

"I won't," Will tells Hannibal with quiet ferocity. "I fucking won't, you know I won't."

"If he takes you back to the States, I believe you are facing fifteen counts of murder at least, and I suspect more for accessory."

"*Fine*," Will growls. "But I *won't*."

"I will," Hannibal tells him. "And you will eat or you will starve."

Will's eyes finally tear away from Hannibal to lock on Jack's, and Jack understands now why the girl in the bookshop had searched so hard for words to explain why she'd been frightened.

Will's eyes aren't hard, or cold. They're furious, but they're wet, and terrified. He looks trapped. Desperate. The eye contact only lasts a moment.

Then Will's eyes are on Lecter again, and Will is lunging toward the knife block. Jack turns to track him, gun raised, and lines up his shot for center mass, squeezing the trigger.

In the process, he turns his back on Hannibal Lecter.

The last thing he does is realize his mistake.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you again to everyone who's taken the time to let me know if they enjoyed this! This fic only happened because so many people commented on the last one :)

Come follow me on tumblr or subscribe to me here on the archive if you're looking for more by me. I'm currently posting an AU where Will never left Louisiana to join the FBI, so Hannibal ended up as Jack's prize profiling consultant, called What The Water Gave Me.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!